
An SAB Synopsis

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A Summary of a Just-Released SAB Report

October 13, 1998

Review of the Agency's Residual Risk Report to Congress

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The Science Advisory Board (SAB) has found a US Environmental Protection Agency (Agency) Report to Congress on an important air pollution issue to be a generally good draft of a strategy document. However, the Board said that the strategy document must be strengthened in a number of important places when it is applied to actual residual risk assessments. They were highly supportive of the Agency's coming back to the SAB in 1999 with examples in which the Report's strategy is used in specific cases.

This view emerged when the Residual Risk Subcommittee of the SAB Executive Committee convened in public session on August 3, 1998 to review the Agency's draft Residual Risk Report to Congress (Report). The Report describes the strategy methods the Agency will use to assess the risk remaining, (i.e., the residual risk) after maximum achievable control technology (MACT) standards, applicable to emissions sources of hazardous air pollutants (HAPs), have been promulgated under Section 112(d) of the Clean Air Act of 1990.

The SAB endorses the underlying the risk assessment(RA)/risk management (RM) approach described in the Report. At the same time, there are additional points that should be confronted more directly and explicitly, including the following:

1. The Report should more carefully convey the limitations of the data, models, and methods that are described or that would be needed to carry out the residual risk assessment activities.
2. The Report should contain or cite specific examples to clarify what some of the bold, but vague, language is intended to convey.
3. There needs to be a more clearly described screening approach that will prioritize stressors for assessment and will husband Agency resources.
4. The Report should be more explicit about how the residual risk assessments will be used to make risk management decisions.

The SAB report contains many other specific comments, as well as an appendix containing written comments from individual members.

A complete copy of this report is available

1. On the SAB Website
[<http://www.epa.gov/sab>]
2. By request from the SAB office through
Email [pope.derrick@epa.gov], or
3. By Fax [202-260-1889].